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This was not the first time I heard this. He had brought some things with him that he could sell for more in Morocco than he could sell in the U.S. The reason for this was import and export limitations, something he knew a lot about. ~~He~~ Before we boarded the airplane to Hong Kong, he shipped a package to himself [REDACTED] to receive at the hotel. The package included a rifle scope, high value. When we opened the package at the hotel he told me he could sell it in Morocco for a lot of money because there was nothing like it there. There were a lot of tourists that come to Morocco for hunting. None of this brought up red flags. That's just how he was. So back to our date night...

He said he needed me to go buy the binoculars because I ~~could~~ knew the train stops better and I could navigate better. All of this was true. This would be a huge stress on him and I could take care of it no problem. Also, I really wanted to get out of the hotel room.

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So the next day, they purchased the binoculars using PayPal and the ~~company~~ company's online website. I called the company and told them not to ship the products that I would be there shortly to pick them up. From there I got dressed and headed to the train. I made it there and picked up. I didn't know how many he had bought. He just told me to call him when I got there and he would confirm with the company that I was picking up the proper merchandise. And that's exactly how it went. But when I got there I didn't realize how much it was and it was a lot. 6 sets of high powered binoculars, they were very heavy. I decided not to take the train because it was too much. So I hired a taxi. I made it back to the hotel and called my husband to take them upstairs. From there the brothers decided to do the same thing but with cameras. This time they took care of the ~~purchase~~ purchasing and picking up.

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He even bought a couple of fake Rolexes to resell.

One night, him and his brother went out to buy merchandise. My husband had left his phone in the room. At an effort to [REDACTED] understand my husband's strange behavior, I decided to look through his phone and see if I could make sense of things. His behavior wasn't completely out of the ordinary but I felt there was something wrong, something he wasn't telling me. The biggest thing was keeping me as far away from his brother as possible. We never all did something together. We didn't even eat together. My husband was either with [REDACTED] me or his brother. What I found I was completely shocked. I found text conversations between my husband and his brother talking about trying to find a way into Syria. It seemed as if his brother was doing most of the work on this which was typical with his controlling nature.

Going back to the way my husband was a little more will help you understand better.

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My husband was a very in the moment Kind of guy. For example, if someone said "I like the color blue." ~~He~~ He would say "You know, I really like blue too! I never knew how much I like the color blue until now!" From there, there would be some life changes based on the color blue. He would say "Blue doesn't show dirt as well on the car!" And a week later the car would be painted and we would have new blue carpet in the house. "Blue relaxes me" — so now the back drop of his computer is blue and buying new blue furniture for a relaxing new house. Now a red or a black pen is not acceptable because he read statistics saying smarter people write in blue. Even the color of his soap should be blue now. To be honest, thinking back I don't know how I put up with bullshit for so long.

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So anyway, going back to the text conversations. They were obviously texting when my husband was with me. I think back and yes he was on his phone a lot but that was normal.

The conversations were going back and forth. His brother was trying to convince him they could find someone to take them across the border. My husband was trying to convince his brother not to trust anyone and that they could buy a motorcycle and cross through the desert by themselves. But it seemed there was another problem. Where they should cross from? Most of the conversations had been obviously deleted. I desperately tried to find anything else in his phone that would help me know what the hell was going on. Everything had been deleted or he wasn't using his phone, I wasn't sure. The conversation insinuated crossing into Syria, but they didn't know which part to cross. They didn't seem to know which parts of the border were under control of Islamic State and which parts were under control of other rebels or government.

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Trying to figure out how they were planning to get to Syria, I checked the forwarded e-mail confirmation of the purchased airplane tickets. From Hong Kong to a 5 hour layover in ~~the~~ Istanbul Turkey, from Istanbul to Casablanca, Morocco.

My mind just shut down with confusion. I was overwhelmed. I thought we made it past this? This was a huge change in me.

... Pause ...

Dear Reader,

At this point in the story, you must understand my heart caught up with my head. Excuse my language but I was never so fucking furious.

Putting my feelings into words is really impossible.

No one could ever understand how betrayed I felt. Oddly, more betrayed than everytime I caught him cheating and lying. No one would ever know the sacrifices I made, no one would know how much I ignored. His intent to cheat and do drugs all leading up to this?

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I realized at that moment, I would never be able to do enough to make him happy.

I realized at that moment all the plans we had made was just an illusion. It was a moment in life I was completely out of control.

What was true and what was a lie. I started thinking back on all the stupid things my husband does/did and I became furious. I think I was more tired than anything. Tired and beaten.

He won and that's ok. I had a plan to get the last laugh.

... End Pause ...

OK So back to the realization of reality and stupid and naive I had been.

I had decided not to say anything about my discovery. I played it cool and went as if nothing was happening. This was very difficult. For the past 4 years, he was my best friend. But on a good point I wasn't disappointed in not seeing his brother or being separated. I HATED him! I wouldn't speak to him or even look at him.

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This seemed more of a relief to my husband than bothersome. Considering they had a super secret together. I was sure his brother was behind all this bullshit. I was tired of talking my husband out of buying a 3<sup>rd</sup> Bobcat or putting in blue carpets. This was HIS problem, not our problem. My problem now was trying to stay a few steps ahead. I didn't want him to take off with all our money. We had worked so hard for everything and I wasn't leaving empty handed. I saw this happen to my sister with her divorce. At this point I had the upper hand because:

1. this was not a divorce
  2. He didn't know I knew what was going on
- I knew to succeed I had to be as coniving as I knew he could be.

Because I didn't know a lot about what was going on, I just stayed alert. He totally played it cool. Then maybe 2 days before we were supposed to get on the airplane to "Morocco", I got a text from my friend

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who also worked in the family business. She ~~finally~~ said in many more words "why did you lie to me? Why couldn't you have told me?" I texted her back asking what the hell she was talking about? I thought she was talking about the move to Morocco. I didn't tell anyone because I didn't want anyone trying to talk me out of it. But she was talking about something else. I called her. She told me that my husband's other brother had called a business meeting. He had announced that me and his brother had gone to Islamic State. She apparently knew more than I was supposed to know- I told her it wasn't true and don't worry. I told her that I would be back after a few months. I told her about my plan for Morocco. My husband was listening to the whole conversation. Once I hung up with her, I told him what she said. He didn't say anything to me. He only picked up his phone and called his brother that exposed his plan.

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I can only imagine how that conversation went. He was yelling in Moroccan at his brother. After he finished his conversation, he hugged me and apologized for lying.

At this point in the story I would like to take you back to my husband's personality. He was a people pleaser. I often wonder if he ever did anything out of Sincerity. But when he would come home and he would grab the kids and pick them up and spin them around laughing like he hadn't seen them in a year. Then it was my turn. He would grab me and kiss me like he was more in love everyday. Even if he wasn't sincere, I believed he was sincere when he would ask me how my day was.

I believe he went out of his way in buying me things and pretending to be so sincere because he knew how bad he had been and that I had put up with more than I should have, But I think in some ways he felt like he did more good than bad.



I often wonder where we might be today if he felt adequate enough to be himself instead of having to be someone he's not and buying everyone's happiness. Simply put, he was lonely because he was the only one that knew his real self. I saw glimpses but he hid himself very well. I know he wanted to be a good person but I think it was just easier being a fake good person, keeping up appearances. Sometimes I think he didn't know who he was and was looking for his place in the world. For sure, that's why he is dead today.

OK, So back to his apology and a half ass explanation of what the hell he was thinking... He said he was sorry for not telling me, but he knew I wouldn't support him considering the way I reacted before. He said he wasn't asking me to come but to be honest he wasn't going allow me to separate him and his daughter. I became angry telling him He was the one separating, not me. Everything was an elaborate lie. Supposibly so he



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could take S [REDACTED] with him. So, I now I understand how dangerous the situation is.

I am out of the country with my husband telling me he is going to cross the border into a war torn country with my 2 year old daughter after exposing an elaborate lie. What the hell had he been planning to do? I mean, at this point I wasn't supposed to know anything and he didn't know I knew before. But what I assumed was only going to be the 2 of them turned into 3 of them. I was trying to stay a step ahead of him but obviously I was slower. Now I have 2 choices:

~~1. Walk away with my son~~

1. Walk away with my son
2. Stay with my daughter and everything I had worked for.

What I previously described as His problem has quickly turned into OUR problem. An unexpected twist. I'm not sure why this was so surprising. I knew how coniving he could be.

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So, my response to all of this was "I understand why you lied." That was the nicer way of saying "of course you had to lie you fucking idiot because you know I would kill you in your sleep!" Instead of reacting like that. I kept my cool. Something I used to be pretty good at. I didn't contact anyone because I was afraid if he found out, he would take off in the middle of the night or something stupid like that. I know he could have gotten away with it. As much as he was an asshole, no one could accuse him of being stupid. But as far as he was concerned, he believed I was supporting him the same way I had been supporting him for years. I hid the volcano that was inside me. I just had to stay relaxed. So off we went to the airport.

— Just to clarify something, he believed I was supporting him but I made it clear that I would not cross the border. I told him I was going to Morocco —

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So, we boarded the airplane. A constant awkward Silence. Even more awkward was that my husband insisted I sit next to his brother on the airplane. He knew his brother would talk for hours about what was going on. He expected his brother to give me the explanation of why they wanted to do what they were doing. And that's exactly what happened.

What seemed like a never ending flight to Turkey he didn't shut up about "even if they didn't agree with the "caliphate" as muslims they were required to join". He said that by convincing his brother to go he believed he was saving him from hell fire. I asked him why they wanted to go to a place they would most certainly be killed. He said because it was the fastest and most successful way to heaven. Then I asked why they wanted to kill S [REDACTED]? He said ~~that~~ my husband was required to take S [REDACTED] because she is a blood born muslim and that if she died she would go straight to heaven.

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what I like to call the "conversation of bullshit" went on for hours. "Thank God we finally landed."

... PAUSE ...

Dear Reader,

Most people that know me would describe me as a hateful person but with a good heart. There is an on-going joke between me and my friends and family "I am not prejudice, I hate everyone equally." If I was prejudice or racist I would not married a muslim man from Morocco. Some things I say I may sound prejudice but I am only prejudice to ignorance or stupid people. Anyone who blindly follows Islam I believe to be ignorant, therefore I am prejudice. People who follow Islam and know how violent, humiliating and degrading it is towards God, I am prejudice. I would spend all day trying to convince you that all mankind has a choice in religion and no one should be forced into believing something they don't believe. But I do believe there is a right choice and a wrong one. I will leave it at that.

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... END PAUSE ...



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All through the Turkish airport there was police and security. I didn't know what to do. I was sure if I reported my husband I would go to jail as well. Honestly I didn't know what to do, I was going minute by minute.

My husband took us to a very nice hotel with a beautiful view. From this point he would not let us out of his site. For sure, if I was out by myself and I found a police officer I would have been brave enough to say something but my husband would not allow me to go out without him. If I would have known then what I know now, I absolutely would have been a stronger person running, yelling and screaming. Also, speaking honestly, when I would see people I only saw terrorists. All of this was way over my head and way better planned out. It's true, I don't believe I could have out smarted my husband. He was always prepared for everything.

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He always planned for the worst I'm sure he was aware that I wanted to run and that's why the next few days went the way they did.

In Turkey, he was more generous than usual. He overdid everything. Candle lit dinners, time away from the kids, shopping, sweet words, etc. We spent a few days in 4 different cities. Taking the bus from city to city. On the bus from Adana to Sanliurfa, he held me close and kissed me on the head telling me I was the best thing that ever happened to him and that he loved me. He said he was going to miss me and that no one could ever replace me. He said that I should know once he makes it to Islamic State he would re-marry but he would never divorce me and soon him and S [REDACTED] would join us in Morocco. I told him I loved him too and would miss him. He asked me "you won't miss S [REDACTED]?"

OK, you should know right now I have a plan to keep my daughter and my savings.

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A plan I thought was the only way. My husband and his brother still had no idea how they were going to cross the border. I was privy to all conversation now because of course I knew everything. My husband was still stuck on buying a motorcycle, crossing the border without a smuggler. They were both arguing badly about this. My husband became upset and told his brother to go to his room that he wanted to sleep. I put my plan into motion.

I told my husband "I don't understand why your brother doesn't think it's a good idea? I think it's a great idea! way better than getting a smuggler who will probably rob you and then take you to the police!" My husband's face lit up like a kid! He didn't even have to say anything, his face said it all. He couldn't believe I was supporting him.

You should know, from the time I found out about this scheme, I only spoke about Morocco and why we couldn't just stick with the plan.

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I used all my conversation trying to de-moralize their plan. This would be the first supportive thing I've said. At that moment, me and my husband got a taxi and went to dealerships looking for motorcycles. I convinced my husband to do it without his brother. The way I convinced him was telling him if he was able to go across the border and see that everything was fine and come back, then I would go with him on his second trip. "It would be too much to bear living without you" and all that beautiful bullshit. I had him convinced to leave everything including S [REDACTED] with me, to go check it out and then come back for us. Of course, by the time he would make it back, I would be gone.

I didn't expect it to be so difficult to buy a motorcycle in Turkey, my husband was unable to buy one. We spent all day trying. We came back to the hotel unsuccessful only to get "good news" from his brother.



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His brother made contact with an Islamic State member from Mosul. The man had travelled to Mosul from Canada and was apparently pretty well known. He sent a message to my husband's brother with a picture of him standing in front of a Hummer with an Islamic State flag painted on it. The Hummer was parked under an overpass for a highway. He was a tall black man with a big beard. I went to the bathroom to catch my breathe. I could hardly breathe --- Is this for real?! I heard my husband's brother listening to an audio message from the man saying "If you are spies we will surely know and cut off your heads." At that point, my husband gave his brother the "good news" that I would be joining them.

I came out of the bathroom almost having a panic attack. I said "Are you guys crazy?! He just threatened to cut off your heads!" My husband's brother responded "only if we are spies and we are not spies"

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My husband took me aside and tried to calm me down. We took a walk up to the roof. I asked him "Are you really so stupid to cross the border with all the new camera equipment and binoculars cash and gold and expect not to be suspected of being a spy?!" He just told me to calm down and they would have no "proof" they were spies. I said to him "ok, because we are going to a civilized country where you have to have "proof" to execute someone?" That's when I confronted him with the executions made public. ~~People~~ People Kidnapped and then executed for no apparent reason except they didn't agree with Islamic State creed. He said Islamically they had a right to execute all those people. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I obviously was not speaking to my husband anymore.

His brother had arranged a Smuggler from Sanliurfa, Turkey to Tal Abyad, Syria. I was quickly running out of time.

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